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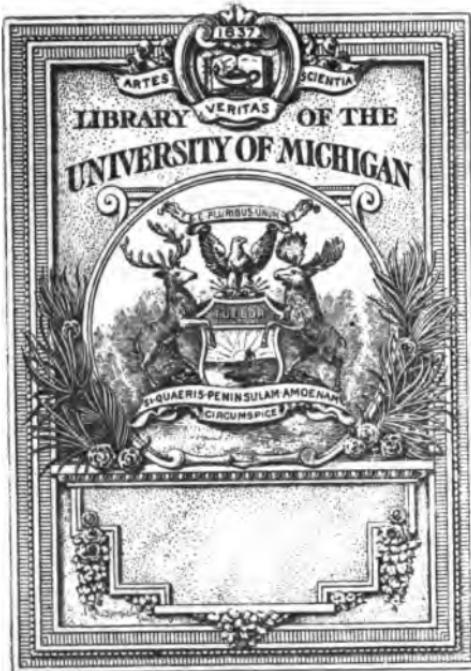
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RHYMES
OF THE
STREAM
AND
FOREST

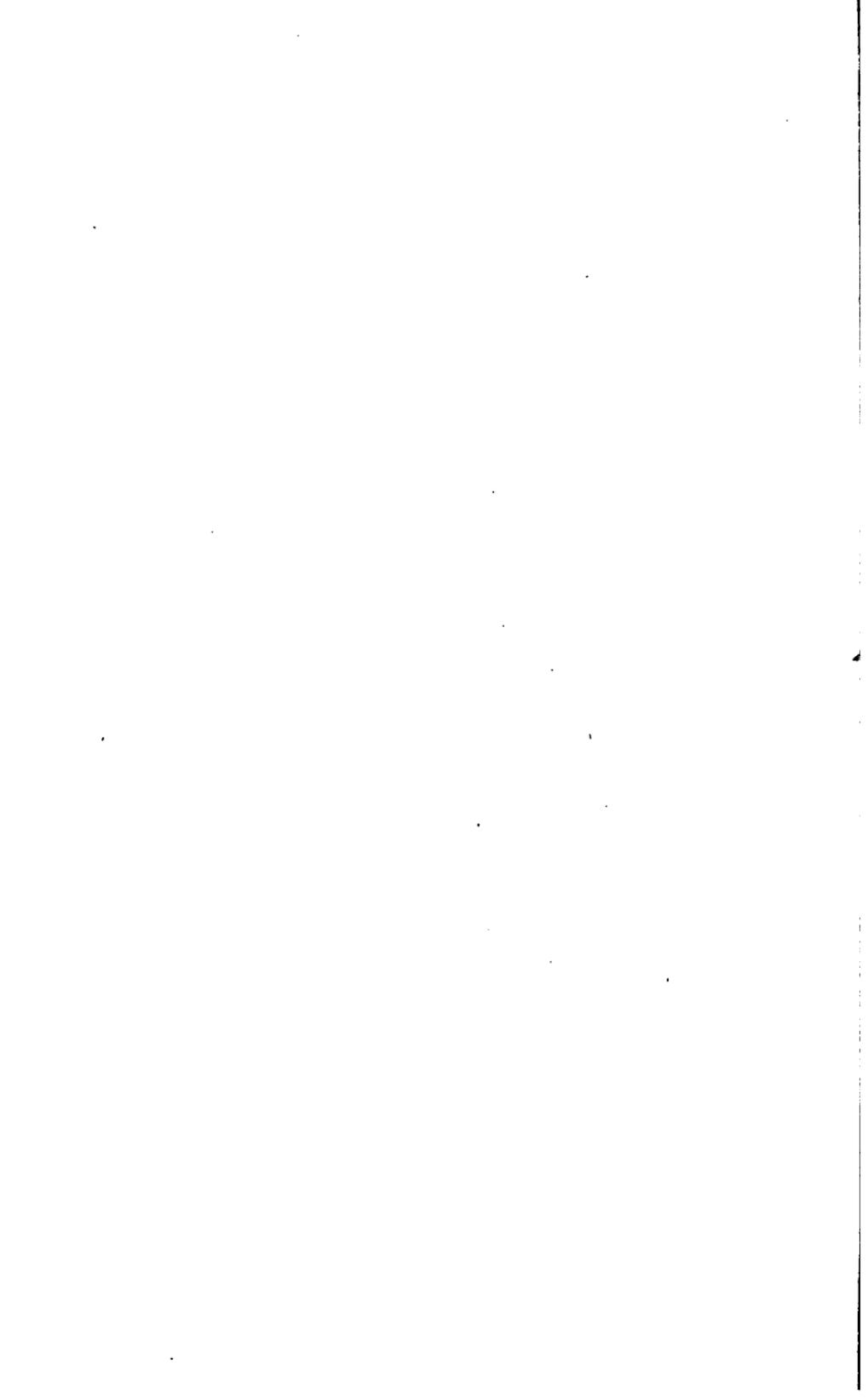
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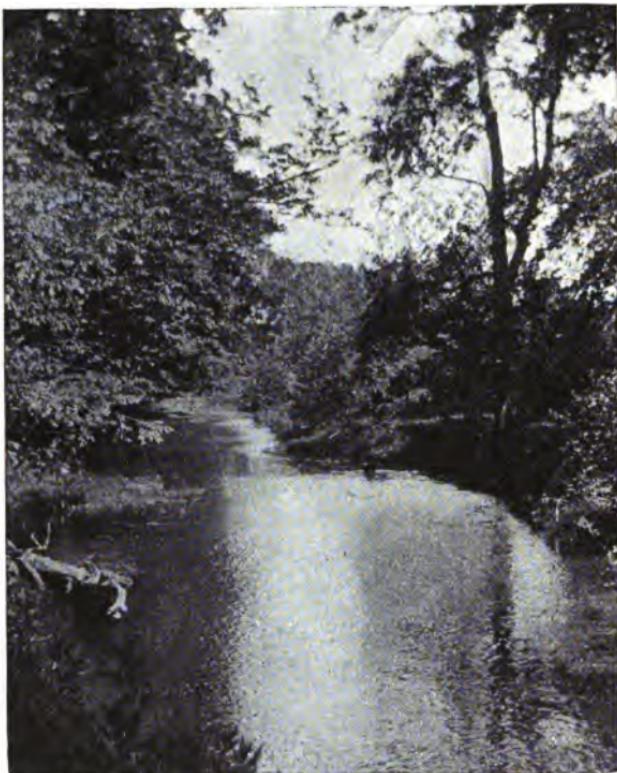
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MERTON
BUCKLAND



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"I in these flowery meads would be,
These crystal streams should solace me."

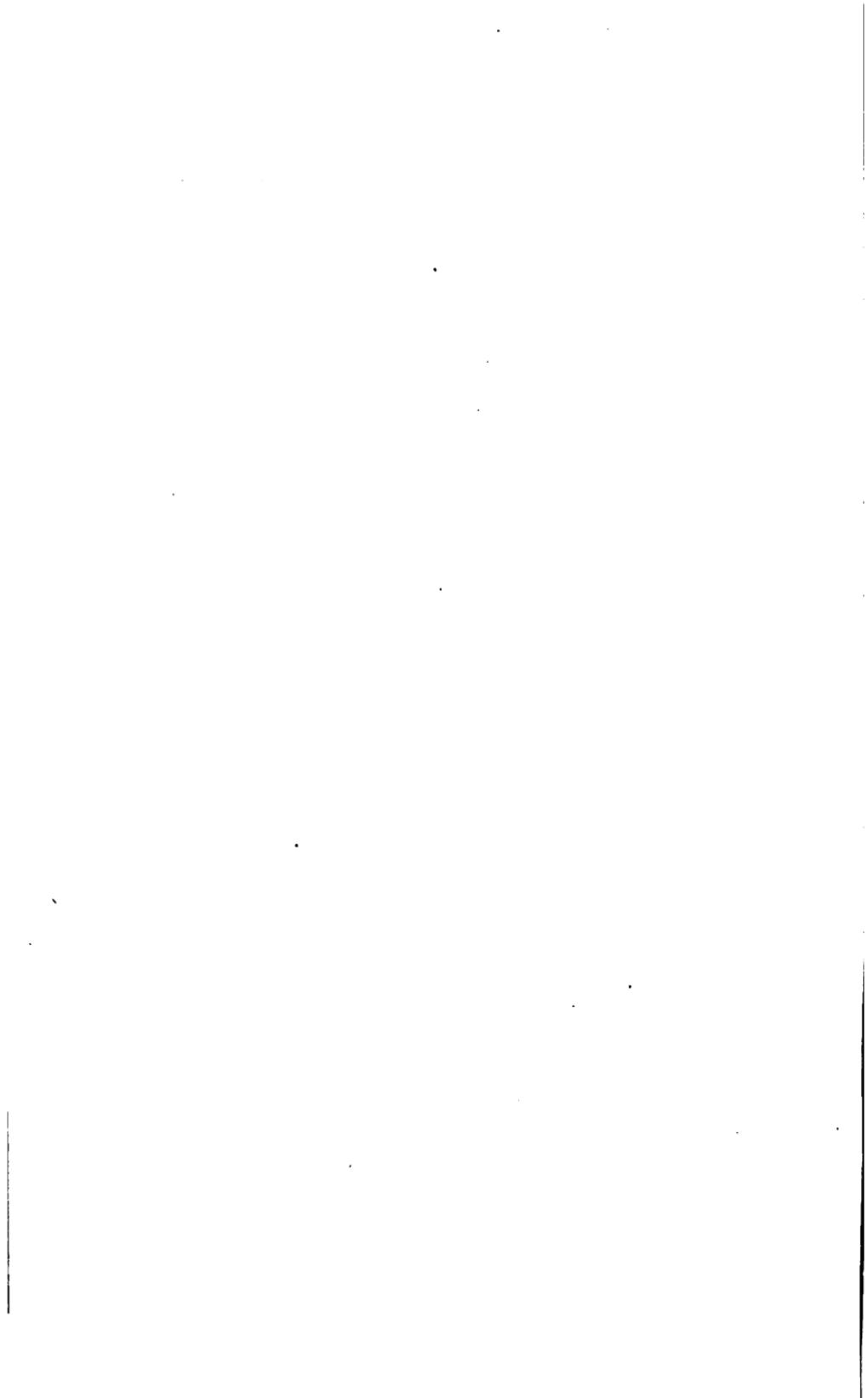
—Walton.

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Rhymes of the Stream and Forest



By
FRANK MERTON BUCKLAND



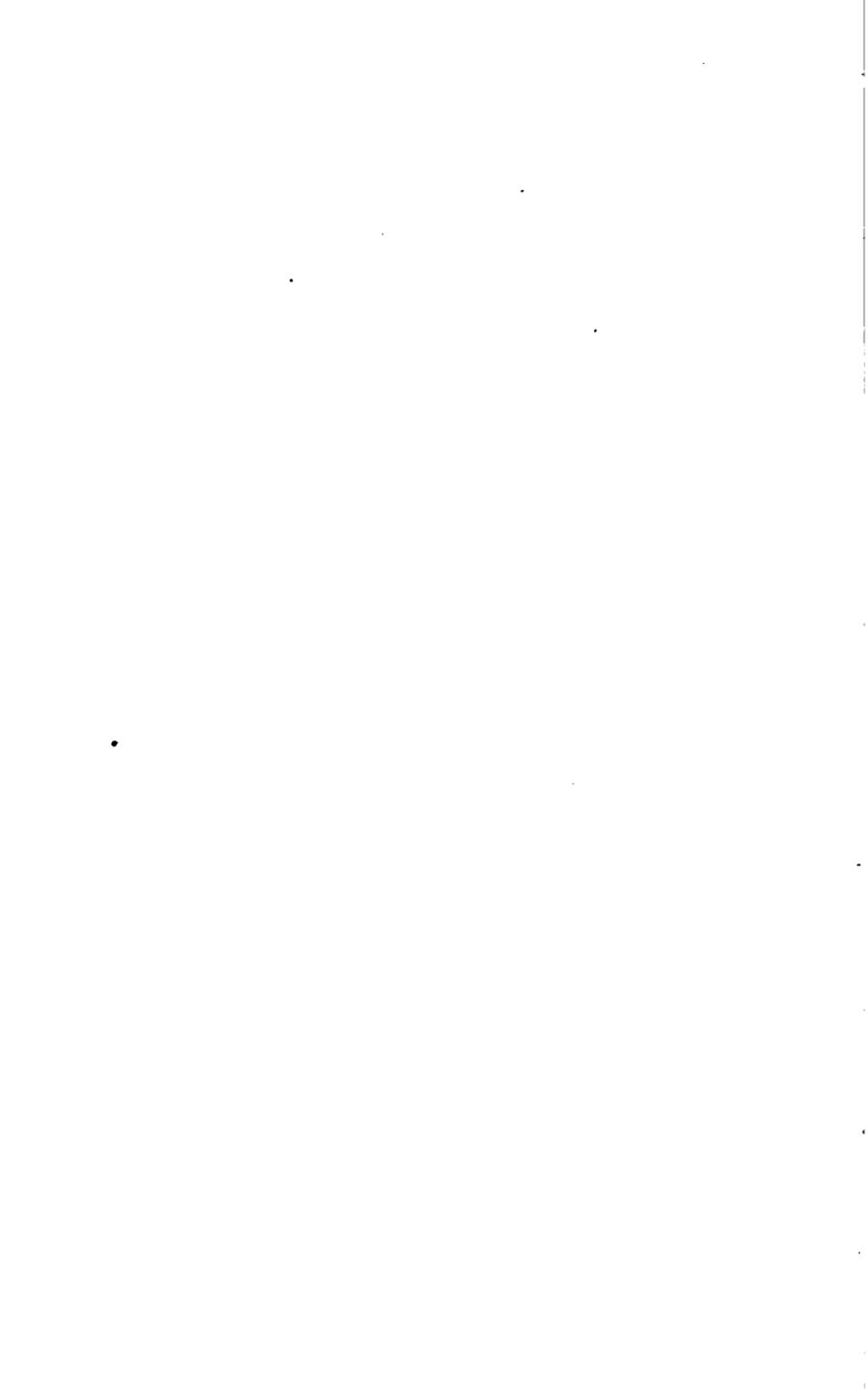
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202150



To My Mother



Foreword

TO those who love the forest, and who find a rare companionship in the murmur of a flowing stream, there come moods when that love and companionship seek expression in attempted rhyme. Let such be my apology for that herein contained.

The inspiration, if such there be, of what I have written, has come from the forests and the streams, themselves. The actual writing, in most cases, having been first done upon some stray bit of paper, found in my camp-kit or in the pocket of my fishing coat.

The reason for the present form of publication lies in the fact that most anglers cherish those rhymes, however crude, that treat of their beloved recreation, or of the grandeur of Nature. Because of this fact I have here, in reproducing the essential features of a Fly-book, endeavored to present a means whereby such rhymes, wherever found, may be preserved.

Within the pocket, where in the actual Fly-book are found the leaders and various other necessities of the angler's art, may be preserved magazine and newspaper clippings. Again, within the ordinary Fly-book are found blank leaves separating those containing the multi-colored assortment of flies. Such blank pages in this present volume are intended for whatever copying or original verse it may be desired to preserve.



Voices of the Stream and Forest

Voice of the Stream! What measured sweetness lies
Within the spell of thy rare harmony.
What fancies of the long-gone past arise,
When to the ear is born thy melody.

Voice of the Forest! Whose half-heard refrain,
Steals on the sense in whispered mystery:
Would that around my soul might fall again
The charm of thy breeze-murmured witchery.



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The Silent Places

I love the silent places where the trees
With moss-encrusted trunks, their ranks re-
peat,
Where whispers low, from every passing breeze
Seem but to make the silence more complete.

I love to roam far from the paths of men,
To feel the heart-throb of the ancient wood,
To stand perhaps within some shadowed glen
Where once of old some painted warrior stood.

I love to thread the dim-lit forest aisles,
Whose arch on arch, their shadowed mysteries
hold,
To feel, beneath these vaulted tangled wilds,
As in the spell of some cathedral old.

Old Forest Paths! I love your hidden ways,
Your mystery that thrills my whole soul
through,
To be alone within your tangled maze,
To be alone with Nature's God, and you.



The Stream's Enchantment

When deep within a tangled forest
I find a crystal moss-rimmed stream,
There for a time I sit and wonder,
Wondering, rest I there and dream.

While o'er the mossy stones the waters
Sing sweetly as they glide away,
Their magic then once more brings o'er me,
Fond memories of a by-gone day.

From out the murmur of the waters,
Voices of friends I used to know
There once again, seem they to call me
Back to those days of long ago.

The stream, the moss-grown bank, the forest
Then from my vision slowly fade,
Once more in fancy am I roaming
Where boyhood's happy scenes were laid.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

The stream where first I learned of fishing,
The pond o'er which the willow hung,
The swimmin' hole, the elm above it
From where in June the robin sung.

The scent of daisies from the meadow,
The bobolink's clear melody.
The quail's far call from out the pasture,
The breath of that fair Summer's day.

The wood where in the Fall we gathered
The nuts among the fallen leaves,
The spell of Winter o'er the woodland,
Its hush again my soul receives.

Then do you wonder that I love it,
Sweet music of a forest stream,
That 'round my soul weaves such enchantment,
The gladness of a boyhood dream.





Walton's Angler

Old Walton! Here within thy book what sweet-
ness lies.

What whispered fancies here from out thy pages
rise,

Of waters flowing peacefully 'neath summer
skies.

Of shadowed nooks upon some quiet river's
shore,

Where far from deafening tumult of the city's
roar,

One turns for rest when for a time his task is
o'er.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

Of meadows freshened by the gently falling rain,
Of wayside inns, where old-time friends meet
once again,
To crack a merry jest or sing some old refrain.

In fancy thus I catch the flowing river where,
Bathed by the incense of the perfume-laden air,
You, Walton, stand in pure contentment fishing
there.





The Trout's Beauty

You may sing of the glory of jewels,
Of the flash of the diamond's ray,
Of the lights that glow in the western sky
At the close of some perfect day.

You may sing of the splendors of daybreak,
Of the tint of the tropic skies,
Of the morning glow o'er some distant sea
Where the drift of the cloud-bank lies.

But for me there's a far richer beauty
With a wealth of color more rare
Than the play of the fairest earth-won gem,
Or the lights of the 'lumined air.'

A rich beauty, the rarest in Nature,
Or the wealth of an artist's dream,
That is found in the glory of color
Of a trout from some crystal stream.







Fishing

You ask me, why I love this fishing,
Why, by some quiet stream I care to stray,
When far from out the south a-blowing,
The wind comes gently at the break of day.

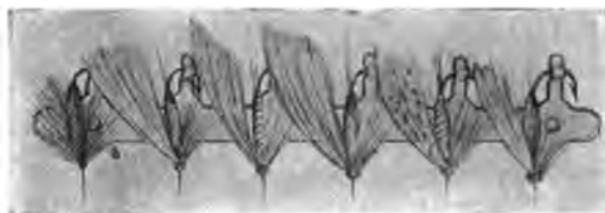
You ask me, why I love to harken
As o'er the mossy stones, the waters sing.
Why, often there, I stop and ponder
The message that those laughing waters bring.

I answer: Have you tried this fishing,
When 'round your soul life's weary burdens
lie?

Have you gone forth and heard the waters
That sing of peace, beneath God's open sky?

Of peace and rest, rest for one weary.
Of strength to throw aside some long-borne
care.

That joy one only finds a-fishing,
Such have I found beside the waters there.



Old Rod

Old rod, we've traveled many miles
Since first we started out together,
We've seen some fishing, you and I,
In pleasant and in rainy weather.

We've started in the early dawn
When other folks were still a-dreaming,
We've caught the first rays of the sun
Above the eastern tree-tops beaming.

We've brushed the dew from off the grass
In May, when first the birds were singing,
Such music, you and I have heard
From out the waking woodland ringing!

We've heard the songs of many streams
In woodland and in grass-grown meadow,
The water purling o'er the stones
We've seen in sunlight and in shadow.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

We've seen the flowers that early grow
Near where the water cold is running,
We've found the May Flower's dainty star
In dryer spots, its petals sunning.

We've felt the breath of early Spring,
We've fished where Summer's streams were
flowing,
We've fished again, when o'er the land
The late Fall winds were rudely blowing.

We've traveled home at dewey eve,
Sometimes with basket full to brimming,
More often, truth to tell, the fish
We should have caught, were still a-swimming.





The Forest Voices

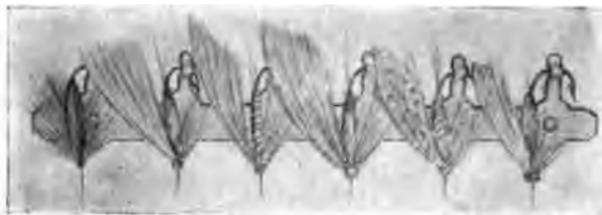
I have heard of old the Forest Voices calling,
In Spring's fair freshness and in Summer's
deeper green.
In the Autumn, when the ripened leaves were
falling,
And yet again, when Winter held the changing
scene.

The moaning of the beaten storm-swept forest
trees,
The varied sounds of life within the shadowed
wood,
Of such are built the forest's wondrous sym-
phonies,
That heard by men, are yet but faintly under-
stood.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

Could I but catch the pine tree's whispered
melody,
The murmured singing of some crystal forest
stream,
Then would I rhyming build such perfect har-
mony
As once perhaps was heard in some sweet
poet's dream.





I'm A Longing

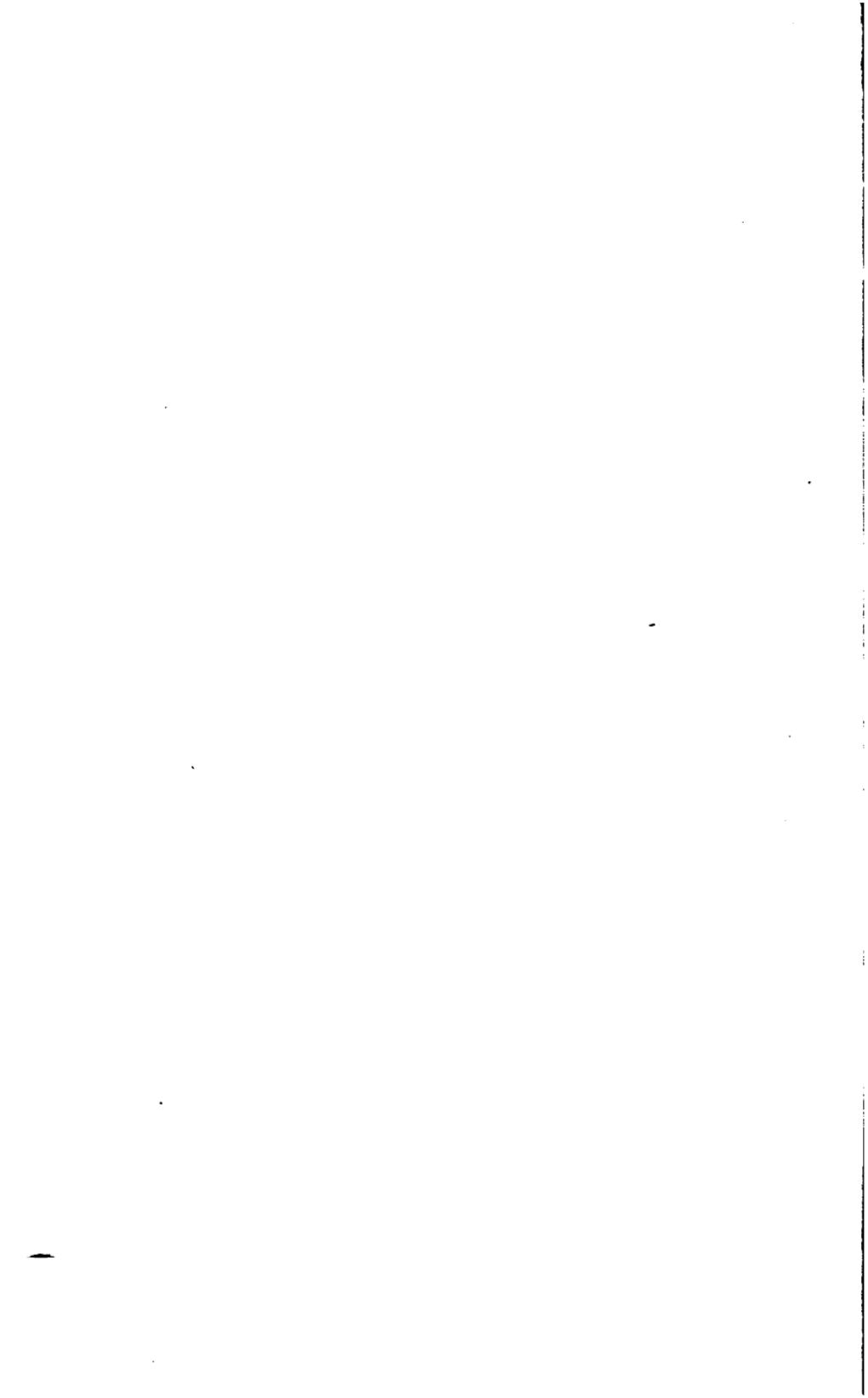
I'm a-longing for the magic of the hills,
For the waters where the speckled fighters
rise,
For the murmur of the moss-rimmed hidden rills
In the valley where the mountain shadow lies.

I'm a-longing for the balsam-scented breeze,
For the fragrance of the moisture-laden air,
For the network of the grand old forest trees,
And the silence of the woods about one there.

I'm a-longing once again the trail to thread,
Where the shadows of the trees unbroken lie,
Where the moss sinks deep beneath the silent
tread,
And the coolness hides beneath the sultry sky.

Yes, I'm longing for those dear old hidden ways.
In my dreams their hallowed spots again I see.
Then I live once more those by-gone camping
days,
And anew, I catch the forest mystery.







The Brook

(IN SUMMER.)

The brook in Summer, and the meadow fair,
The ripple's murmur from its stony bed.
The deep still pool where wide the willows
spread,
Its face unstirred by breath of sultry air,
Within its depths, the fish suspended there
On idly moving fins. The mystic thread
That marks the eddy at the ripple's head.
The laziness of Summer everywhere.

The richer green where cool the water flows
'Gainst grass-grown bank, by winding, silent
way,
Then gliding where the brookside tangle
grows,
Unseen, the silent current steals away
To hidden depths, that but the muskrat knows,
While over all the spell of this fair day.



(IN AUTUMN.)

Go seek the brook when Autumn's crystal haze
Lies o'er the distant wood and silent fields,
The course, where silently the current steals
In shrunken volume, through the weedy maze
Where still the green of early Summer stays,
Last green that to the touch of Autumn yields
As o'er the land her mystic spell she wields
Before the chill approach of Winter days.

Now choked by Summer's tangled growth of
weeds,
How noiselessly the water glides away
By leaf-strewn brink, where twisting channel
leads
To silent depths. Then by some hidden way
Where measuredly, the eddy slow recedes,
As though 'twere here the water fain would
stay.



(IN WINTER.)

Hushed was the murmur of the frozen stream
As by its course we stood, one Winter's day.
Ice-bound from bank to bank its surface lay,
But still there filtered through that icy screen
A half-caught hint of flowing waters green,
From where they still pursued their prisoned
way.
Low o'er the snow-clad fields, the clouds of
gray,
Lent somber color to the Winter scene.

The drifted snows above the hidden bank,
The muskrat's muddied track along the
shore,
Where late the meadow grass in masses rank
Had grown. While careless step of ours no
more,
As then in unseen tunneled burrowings, sank,
For firm, the ice-bound crust, our passage
bore.



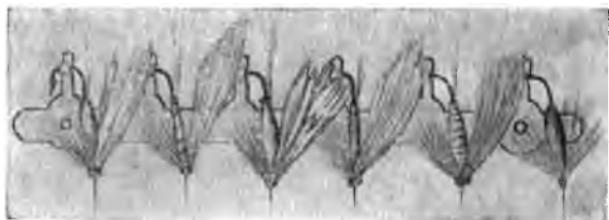
(IN SPRING.)

The swollen, turbid meadow brook of Spring,
Chill waters laden with the melting snow,
The twisting eddies and the current's flow,
In broken ranks, the drifting ice-cakes bring.
The flood, far o'er the meadow wandering,
Along its course, in muddied row on row
The jagged cakes, the lapping waters throw
Then seize and onward down the current swing.

The crunch and tinkle where the ice-cakes
grind,
The voice unceasing, of the swollen stream.
The lisp and murmur where the waters wind
Through sodden tangled grass. The far-
caught gleam
Of foam-flecked meadow, where now uncon-
fined,
The spreading waters claim the lowland
scene.







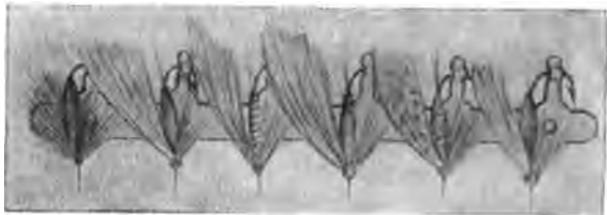
The Moose

Far in the west, the yellow sun went down,
Behind the distant hills of darkening gray.
The wind had ceased and life gave forth no
sound,
For over all, the forest-stillness lay.

A crystal lake among the tree-clad hills
Gave back the last departing golden ray.
Its waters fed by countless woodland rills
For ages thus had sped the parting day.

About the shores of this fair northern lake
A mighty moose, his Summer home had made.
Here had he turned and found his woodland
mate,
With crashing haste, her forest call obeyed.

October's golden haze again spread o'er
The lake and woodland where the moose had
dwelt,
Impatient tramped the beast the forest floor,
Once more his heart, the wander-spirit felt.



To that far call, his blood in answer burned,
Then forth to haunts untried, his course he
laid.
Far toward the south his steps at last were
turned.
Nor rage, nor fear, instinct alone obeyed.

A hunter deeply learned in forest ways,
Whose heart had felt the Autumn-spirit's call,
For miles had trod the woodland's tangled maze,
For guide, his sense of forest-craft was all.

An unknown, sheltered lake at last he found,
Back from whose rocky shores, his home he
made.
His simple tent beside a grassy mound,
Within, his bed of fragrant boughs, he laid.

Here dwelt the man, till o'er the western wood,
The hunter's moon, its silver crescent hung.
Then stirred within his soul, the hunter's mood,
And o'er his back, his trusty gun, he slung.

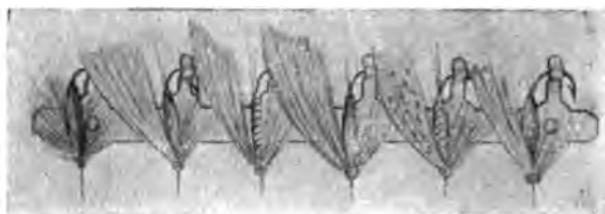


With horn of bark hung ready at his side,
Swiftly he passed along the lake's dark shore,
Until a spot he reached, where spreading wide
A sandy beach, the moon's pale light spread
o'er.

Here then he paused and raised the birchen horn.
Then echoed far an uncouth, mournful call,
Weird melody, by tree and hilltop borne,
Strange longing note, with plaintive rise and
fall.

Then with the passing of that long-drawn note
An added quiet o'er the forest fell,
No call in answer came, howe'er remote,
No sound of life, to break the moonlight's spell.

A moment's pause, again the horn he raised,
Once more, the call the sleeping echoes woke.
Then from within a distant tangled maze
An answering call, the forest silence broke.



Far from' his northern home the moose had
strayed
By winding hidden ways, untried before,
His course still by the mating instinct swayed,
In silence trod the beast, the forest floor.

When with the coming of that moonlit night
Unto his ear, was borne the hunter's call,
His muscles tenser grew, keen for the fight,
Then for a space was silence over all.

That long-drawn note again its summons sent,
Then with a roar, his answering challenge
sped.
Trees, shrubs, all else, before his anger bent,
Beneath the onrush of that antlered head.

When well adown the mountain's rocky side,
Caution once more the creature's instinct
swayed.
His haste withheld, far through the trees de-
scribed
The lake's faint gleam. His onward rush was
stayed.



Then, as a shadow through the darkened wood,
Once more the beast resumed his onward way,
Till well within the tree-lined shore he stood,
Before him bathed in light the sand beach lay.

No massive shape within the moonlight stood,
No mate nor rival bull awaited there.
The black unbroken outline of the wood
Gave forth no taint upon the chill night air.

Some time in silence stood the listening bull,
Then sounded, close at hand, a plaintive call.
Forth on the beach he plunged, huge, masterful,
With head upraised on massive shoulders tall.

A second thus he stood in waiting mien,
Then from the nearby copse, a spurt of flame,
The hunter's rifle sped its yellow gleam,
True in the woodman's hand its deadly aim.

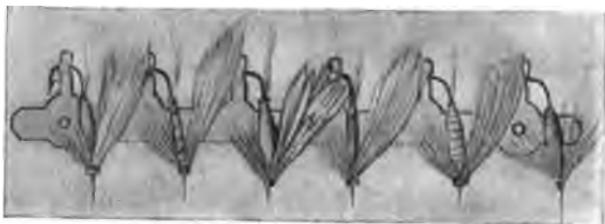


The mighty beast sore hit, with crashing plunge
Backward into the forest plowed his way.
With fiery, stinging pain, each forward lunge,
He knew that northward only safety lay.

With eyes still true to thread the forest ways,
On, on, the wounded beast in terror fled.
Far toward the north, he trod the tangled maze,
His heaving sides now stained a tawny red.

Throughout that weary, pain-filled, moon-lit
night,
The wounded moose kept on his blood-stained
way.
His blinding fear no rest allowed his flight
Until the daylight o'er the forest lay.

Then sank the beast within the forest there,
A moment's rest before his flight renewed,
The while, his nostrils test the morning air.
Then northward once again his flight pursued.



Five weary nights and days of throbbing pain,
The moose pressed onward toward his haunts
of old,

His rests more frequent grown, then on again,
His blood-shot eye still true, his course to hold.

The wounded beast's pursuit long given o'er,
To other trails, the hunter's steps had turned.
To regions tried by such as he before,
When in their veins, the lust to kill, had
burned.

The fifth long weary day was nearly done,
The moose's long flight of pain, was almost
o'er,
As sank behind the hills, the yellow sun,
The beast broke forth upon the lake's cool
shore.

That hidden, northern lake, by men unknown,
Where free from hunted fear the moose had
dwelt,
Secure within his northland forest home
Till in his blood, October's call he felt.



Now wounded sore, again the lake he sought,
His glazing eyes once more its surface sees,
Where motionless, in clearest crystal wrought,
Inverted stand the outlines of the trees.

The beast's huge form upon the lake's dim shore,
As oft' of old at twilight he had stood,
With antlered head upraised, his glance sweeps
o'er
The waters, to the far shore's darkened wood.

A moment thus he stands, then o'er his frame
Again the wound's dull throb, its tremors
spread,
Then to his knees, the beast sinks once again,
Down, down, unto the earth, that massive head.

One mighty effort more to rise, he makes,
Then o'er his form, death's quiet, slowly
creeps.
The sun's last ray, that northern lake forsakes,
As by its shore the fallen monarch sleeps.



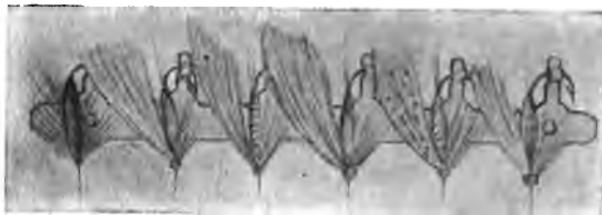




Winter's Slow Retreat

To one who walks alone in early Spring
Among the trees where falls a dreary rain,
By hidden paths where sheltered drifts remain,
Slow melting snows of Winter, lingering,
'Midst happier thoughts, some notes of sadness
ring
Their measured cadence, leaving in their train
A sense of sorrow, sorrow fraught with pain
Soul-felt, that passing, leaves no after-sting.

The leaves in sodden mass beneath the feet,
No sound the footfall makes, while every-
where
The drifting raindrops fall with whispered
beat,
With still a feel of snow, within the air,
A chill that tells of Winter's slow retreat,
And yet the breath of Spring still greets us
there.



Night's Witchery

How often have I lain at night alone
Within the shadow of some sheltering pine,
While o'er my head the wind made somber moan
As through the trees I watched the moon's
decline.

The wind-swept boughs with spectral tracery
In ever changing form, against the sky,
While faintly o'er the wind's wild melody
I caught some wandering night-bird's far-borne
cry.

The scudding clouds beyond the swaying trees,
The open places where the stars gleamed cold,
On such a night, borne on the freshened breeze,
The Spirits of the Wind, wild revel hold.

Thus, while the hours of darkness sped away
Night's witchery upon my spirit lay.



At Night

(A CONTRAST.)

The blaze of myriad lights adown the city street,
The rumbled hum of traffic and the tramp of feet,
The throng, where gem-clad wealth and humble
beggar meet.

The city's massive structures rising grim and tall,
The eye-like gleam of windows from each storied
wall,
The moon's pale face unwearied watching over
all.



Thy Voice

Fair Nature's God, how often have I felt
Thy Presence, when within the deeper wood
In listening reverie have I silent stood
Where but the untamed forest creatures dwelt.

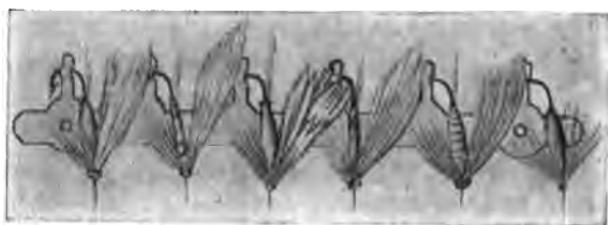
Around me there, the wood's deep silence lay,
Save where from out the north a wandering
breeze
In murmured passage o'er the higher trees
Gave there Thy Voice, in forest melody.

Or when within some wilder, deep-toned mood
The harsher winds, the forest branches bend,
While far abroad, the moaning tree-tops send
Their storm-flung warnings from the ancient
wood,

Then have I heard in sterner mood, Thy Voice,
Upon the sweeping wind, its accent borne.
The stricken trees before the storm-wind torn,
Seemed in their cry, to even then rejoice.







To Prime's "I Go A-Fishing"

Would that my humble pen, some tribute rare,
might pay,
To thee, well styled the Walton of a later day,
Who builded here in prose, poetic harmony.

Book of rare fancies! Here within thy volume
bound
A charm once felt, then gladdens all life's weary
round.
How often have I here, contentment sought, and
found.



“Have You Any Fish?”

Suggested by the first chapter of Prime's
“I Go A-FISHING.”

“I go a-fishing,” Peter said.
Said the rest, “We go with thee.”
So they journeyed down at the close of day,
To their boat by the sun-set sea.

For the Master bade them wait Him,
Till He should appear again,
So to pass through the waiting hours, once more
To fish, went those earnest men.

Could I but gather the story
Of that night in Galilee,
Such a fisherman's tale would then unfold,
As there never again will be.

Of the words and truths there spoken,
The hopes of those fishermen,
As the night hours passed and they waited there
Until He should appear again.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

As the first pale lights of the morning
Spread over that waiting sea,
To the watchers there, rang a voice, sweet toned,
From the shores of old Galilee.

Those words, oft heard by the fisher
As the years have rolled away,
“Have you any fish?” asked the Saviour there,
In the dawn of that long-gone day.

How often, my brother angler,
Home returning, wearily,
Have we heard in greeting, those words of old,
At the end of some happy day.

And hearing, then in our fancy
The dawn of that day we see,
When the Saviour called to His fishermen
O'er the waters of Galilee.





The Forest Silence

To one, who far from human-kind has dwelt
Within the forest's dim untrodden way,
And 'round whose soul night's mystery has crept,
As o'er the woods the pall of darkness lay,
To such as he, without whose cabin door
Unmoved has stood, while o'er his senses fall
The death-like silence of the ancient woods,
The wonder of that stillness over all.
Unto his mind there comes an unformed sense
Of what Eternity's vast gloom must be,
Eternity on earth, when life has passed,
Vast throbbing life, of air, of land and sea.
Such silent gloom as once enwrapt the earth
In ages past, before life's germ was sent,
Such silence as in time to come, will be,
When from the earth, life's vital force is spent.





Lord of the Forest

Lord of the Forest! Whose clear voice is heard
In whispered accents from the murmuring
pine.

A hint of splendor from whose throne we see
As from some lake, we watch the sun's decline.

Lord of the Winds, that o'er the forests blow
From out the Northland's ice-enveloped
strand.

Or in some gentler mood caress the trees
When Summer's spell enwraps the forest land.

Lord of the ever-singing Forest Streams,
Whose murmuring voices chant Thy song of
praise.

Lord of the tree-bound Lakes, from whose fair
shores
The tree-clad hills, their slopes in grandeur
raise.

Lord of the Life that in the forest dwells,
That life, unseen, unheard, except by Thee;
May we who love Thy forest ways, there find
Full understanding of Thy majesty.



The Voices

Voices that sigh and murmur
In accents strange and low,
Voices, but heard in the forest
When the northland breezes blow.

Voices that fade and vanish
With a breath of the freshened air,
And leave but a hint of their passing,
To one who listens there.

Voices once heard, ne'er forgotten,
That in memory ever seem
As of some whispered presence,
In the imagery of a dream.



Newfound Lake—A Memory

The glory of the far-hill's purple haze,
Embanked beneath the wonder-tinted sky,
Where mass on mass in distant splendor, lie
The clouds, lit by the sun's departing rays.
While from the lake's far shore, the forest maze
Enwraps the rugged hills, to where on high
Their rock-faced peaks; the wild-voiced winds,
defy,
When o'er the hills, the forkéd lightning plays.

The shadows lengthen and the daylight fades,
The little stars once more, in lustre rare
Peep forth above the distant forest glades,
While borne adown the ever-freshening air
The chill of night again the soul invades,
And darkness spreads its blanket every-
where.



The Forest

You ask me, why I love the forest,
Why, far from traveled ways I love to roam,
And deep within the shadowed wildwood
Make, for a time, my woodland home.

You ask me, why the forest calls me,
Why dream I often of its hidden ways ;
Why, when the cares of life surround me,
Before me rise those bygone camping days.

I answer ; Have you known the forest,
When, with the breath of peace, it murmurs
low ?

Have you, within its shelter lingered,
As round about, the far-sent breezes blow ?

Once know, my friend, the rare enchantment
That lurks within the shadowed forest old,
There will you turn again, when weary,
To forest-sheltered realms of peace untold.







The Player

Upon the walls the mystery of the firelight's play,
Within the blackened hearth, the fairy-like array
Of flames that for the moment dance, then fade
away.

And fading, then the shadows gather over all,
Save for the glow of embers, and the silvery fall
Of moonlight patches on the rough-hewn cabin
wall.

And as the shadows deepen and the firelight dies,
The player bids once more, a strain of music rise,
More wondrous than the song of birds 'neath
summer skies.



Then as the strain's enchantment floods the darkened air

There flow from out its mystic spell, dim fancies rare,

While ever-changing shadow-forms glide 'round us there.

We catch the voice of rivers and the sigh of trees,
The murmur of the pines where sweeps the forest breeze,

The calls of bird-land and the drowsy hum of bees.

A pause, then from the magic strings, a wilder strain,

A moan, as of some coming storm's far-heard refrain,

Commingled with the distant beating of the rain.



Louder and ever louder rings that note of storm,
The crash of trees, from out their root-bound
moorings, torn,

Now, o'er us, on the wind's wild melody, is
borne.

The music changes and we catch the tramp of
feet,

The swing of marshaled hosts adown some dusty
street,

To war-like call of fife, and drum's unwearied
beat.

Again the music ceases and the player's bow
A time is stilled. Then o'er the strings in move-
ment slow

It passes. While, as though in joy, they murmur
low.



Spell-bound we listen, while a breath of childhood steals

About the soul. And as the silent player yields
His wondrous art, unto the spell the spirit yields.

Of childhood and a care-free youth, the music tells,

Then to the ear is borne the peal of marriage bells,

As sweeter still, the strain's enchantment ever swells.

Stronger it grows, built of the height of manhood's prime,

Then falters and in strains of sterner, measured time,

A note of sadness breathes a hint of life's decline.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

And then a feeble step upon the bedroom stair,
The drawn, hushed whispers of the watchers
waiting there,
The toll of funeral bell, upon the morning air.

The music ceases and the smouldering embers
fade,
The player rests, his slender bow aside is laid,
The silent shadows deepen, and each soul invade.





At Evening

A few short hours and daylight vanishes,
The hush of evening falls and night is come.
A few fair days, and Summer languishes,
The Autumn passes and the fields grow dun.

A few glad years of life and love and sorrow,
The twilight gathers and we stand alone.
Friendship's circle broken as we wait the morrow,
Expectant for the call that bids us home.







And Yet Again

An angler newly wise to ways of fish,
Had often heard from friends that ancient tale,
“I hooked another, with a rush and swish
I lost him, and by George! he was a whale!”

And at such tales, our friend was wont to smile,
That smile wherein is mixed a grain of doubt.
“To-morrow, then,” quoth he, “I’ll fish a while,
And mark you, sir, I’ll land my largest trout.”

Back from the sparkling stream he came,
Refreshed but weary-limbed, at close of day,
And to inquiring friends, his tale the same,
The largest fish he’d hooked had got away.



My Fly-Book

I've a treasure, spotted, stained and worn,
That I would not change for gold,
For money would never yield the charm
That lies in my fly-book old.

For we've listened to many waters
In days that are now gone by,
And we often commune together,
Do my old fly-book and I.

Of things that are known to no other,
Of streams where the waters sing.
Of woodlands where, when the south winds blow,
The bells of the forest ring.

Of the fair face of a forest lake,
And the trees along the shore,
Ripples that break from the birch canoe
As we glide the surface o'er.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

Of rising trout and the circles there
That spread and then die away,
Of the little stars that o'er the trees
Rise clear, at the close of day.

For we've wandered far, old book, and found
That happiness true, that lies
In singing brooks and the tree-bound lakes
Where the speckled beauties rise.

We have journeyed so long together
As the years have rolled away
May I find you here in my pocket
When I fish on that last glad day.





The Old Man's Story

The old man sat in his great arm-chair,
His fly-book on his knee,
And we listened all, to the tale he told,
Of the fish that used to be.

For his eyes were clear, though his hair was
white,
And the old fly-book was worn,
And his thin hand shook as he lifted there
Those flies with feathers torn.

"'Twas back in the days of long ago
That I fished that mountain stream,
And the month was June, and the day was one
When we anglers fish and dream.

Full many a fish to my creel had come
From the pools far up the hill,
Ere I reached the edge of the pasture green
Where the brook flows deep and still.



You know the pool where the shelving bank
Hangs wide o'er the willow's root.
My flies shot clear of the low-hung branch,
Then sank at the rapid's foot.

Though 'twas years ago that good fish rose,
To me, as tho' yesterday,
There comes the glint of his silvery sides
And the flash of the rising spray.

My line snapped taut and my reel yelled keen,
As I met that glorious rise,
And the hook sank deep in the iron-like jaws
Of that fish of wondrous size.

Then he sped below to the pool's black depths,
And my trusty rod bent low,
While my taut line sang through the water clear,
Like the whirr of the redman's bow.

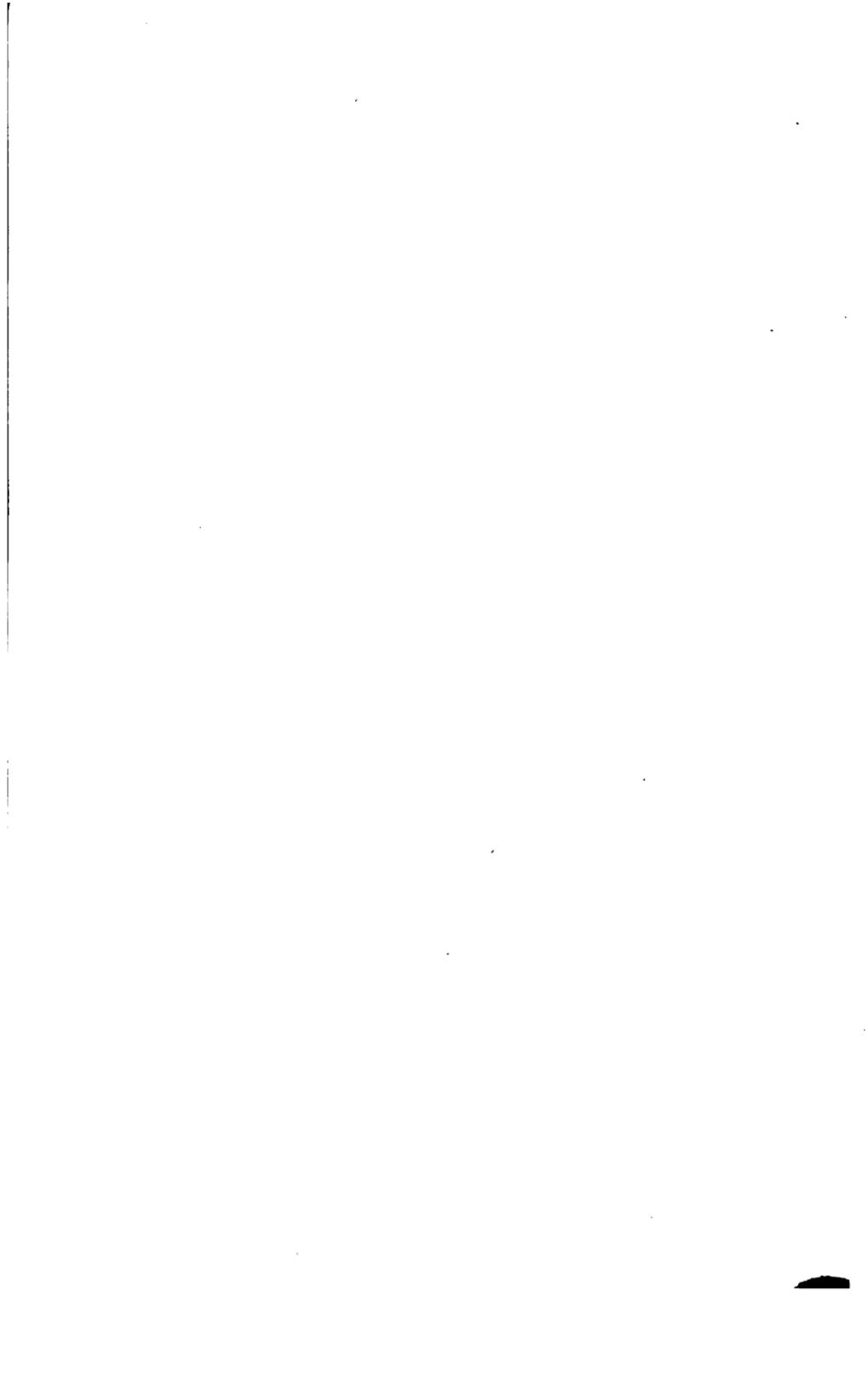


But at last he turned from his downward rush
And sped toward the shelving bank,
Where my line scraped harsh on the willow's
root
While the heart within me sank.

But the old line held and the day was won
For at last that good fish lay
'Mid the grass and ferns of the pasture bank
In the light of that fair June day.

The largest fish in my creel that night,
For he weighed just two pounds four,
Do you wonder then that in memory oft
I fight that battle o'er?"

His old eyes closed, for the tale was done,
And his thoughts on that far-off day
Of that time long gone and that largest fish
That failed to get away.







Song of the Forest

I sing from the heart of the throbbing life,
From the sap within the tree,
From the hidden flowers 'neath the matted leaves,
And the south wind blowing free.

I sing from the cool of the shadowed glade,
When the Summer's sun rides high,
From the deepened green of the full-grown
leaves,
'Neath the heat of the sultry sky.

Once again I sing, when the Autumn winds
Blow chill o'er the woods of brown,
And the ripened leaves on the freshened air
Come silently drifting down.

Then I sing once more, when the drifted snows
Lie deep in the forests gray
And the cold white light of the Winter's moon
Gleams chill at the close of day.



Parmachenee Belle

An Ibis or a Hackle

Shall I fix on my cast to-day?
Or shall I trust to a Grizzly King,
Or the gold of a Yellow May?

Or pin my faith to a Coachman,
Or a Silver Doctor try?
For the day grows dark as the thickening clouds
Drift low in the sultry sky.

But tucked away in a pocket
Of my fly-book, old and worn,
I've a faded fly of a day gone by,
With its feathers stained and torn.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

Trusted in many battles
Under shadowed or sunny skies,
Never yet has that old fly lost its charm
When the fish were on the rise.

So looped again on my leader
Once more let me cast the spell
Of the yellow and white, and faded red,
Of the Parmachenee Belle.





Coming of the Storm

Heat-laden, dull, oppressive was the air,
The sun's hot face shone with an undimmed
ray.

The silence of the woods enwrapt us there,
As on the lake's fair shore, we stood that day.

Few were the whispers of a sultry breeze,
Unmoved, the forest's green beneath it lay,
All motionless, save where the higher trees
Its lightest touch, but answered silently.

Clear-cut as though the trees inverted stood
The far-shore's deep reflection met the eye,
Each varied color of that distant wood
The lake's face pictured 'neath that heated sky.

Within the shadow of the distant shore,
A solitary loon swam lazily.
That bit of life but emphasized the more
The solitude of that still summer's day.



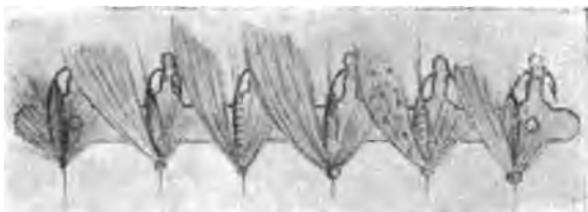
In darkened mass, low o'er the western hills,
Embanked in thickening haze, the storm clouds
 lay.

Their curtain, all the far horizon filled
 With ever-changing mass, in wild array.

Thus while we stood, a greater silence fell,
 A stillness as of death, spread 'round us there.
Lake, forest, all within that silent spell,
 Hushed were the whispers of the sultry air.

O'er all, a moment thus the silence hung,
 Then borne afar from out the darkened west,
From where the storm, its gathering shadows
 flung,
 A murmur of its coming, manifest.

A far-heard beating on the forest leaves,
 A sound as of some faintly distant shore,
Whose beaten sand, the curling wave, receives,
 As from the sea, the ocean breeze sweeps o'er.

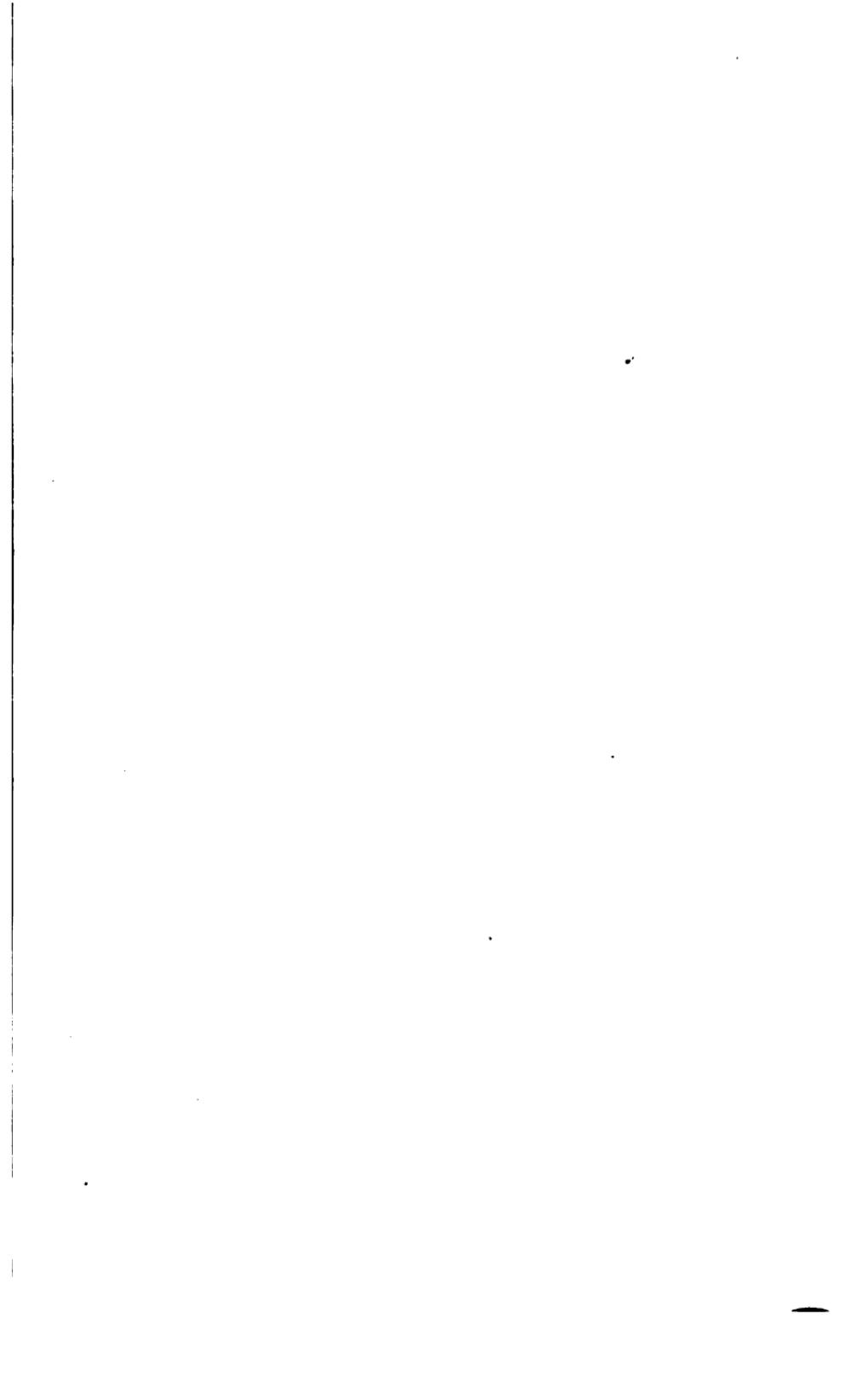


With force increasing, onward swept the storm.
The trees beneath it, cried in wild intone,
Their swaying tops low by the wild winds borne,
Swept onward to our ears, its sullen moan.

The first few scattered raindrops reached the lake,
Their patter heard above the wind's refrain.
Then, wall-like, followed close within their wake,
The drenching down-pour of the driven rain.

Then swept o'er lake and wood, the storm's wild
roar,
The waters whipped to foam beneath its blow.
The waves thrown high upon the beaten shore,
The forest trees before its blast, bent low.

Above the shrieking of the winds, was borne,
From out the far shore's wild, wind-swept
lagoon,
As though some fiend in torment rode the storm,
The weird, unearthly laughter of the loon.





The Unknown Lake

A Summer agone we found you
Walled by the forest old,
Your crystal waters freshened
Where the hidden springs gushed cold.

How passed the spell of Autumn
When the ripened leaves came down,
And on your sheltered waters
Built them their rafts of brown?

Now, locked in your ice-formed mantle
'Neath the gray of the Winter's sky
Unruffled, unmoved, unseeing,
Your silent waters lie.

But the Winter days shall lengthen
And the time of waiting wane,
And we, who have found and loved you,
Shall come to our own again.



At the Trail's End

Mile after mile we have traveled
By the trail's long winding way,
'Til deep in the ancient forest
We rest at the close of day.

Stretched is the roof of canvas,
Fresh-pulled the balsam boughs,
While the camp-fire's new-born crackling
The woodland spirits rouse.

The evening meal is finished,
Tobacco's spell holds sway,
And we drowse and speak of the morrow,
And plan for the coming day.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

Hushed is the darkened forest
'Neath the spell of the northern night,
While the shadows dance and vanish
With the play of the camp-fire's light.

We drowse, and the spell of the firelight
Brings fancies dim and old,
Peopled with new-found faces,
With the charm of some tale untold.

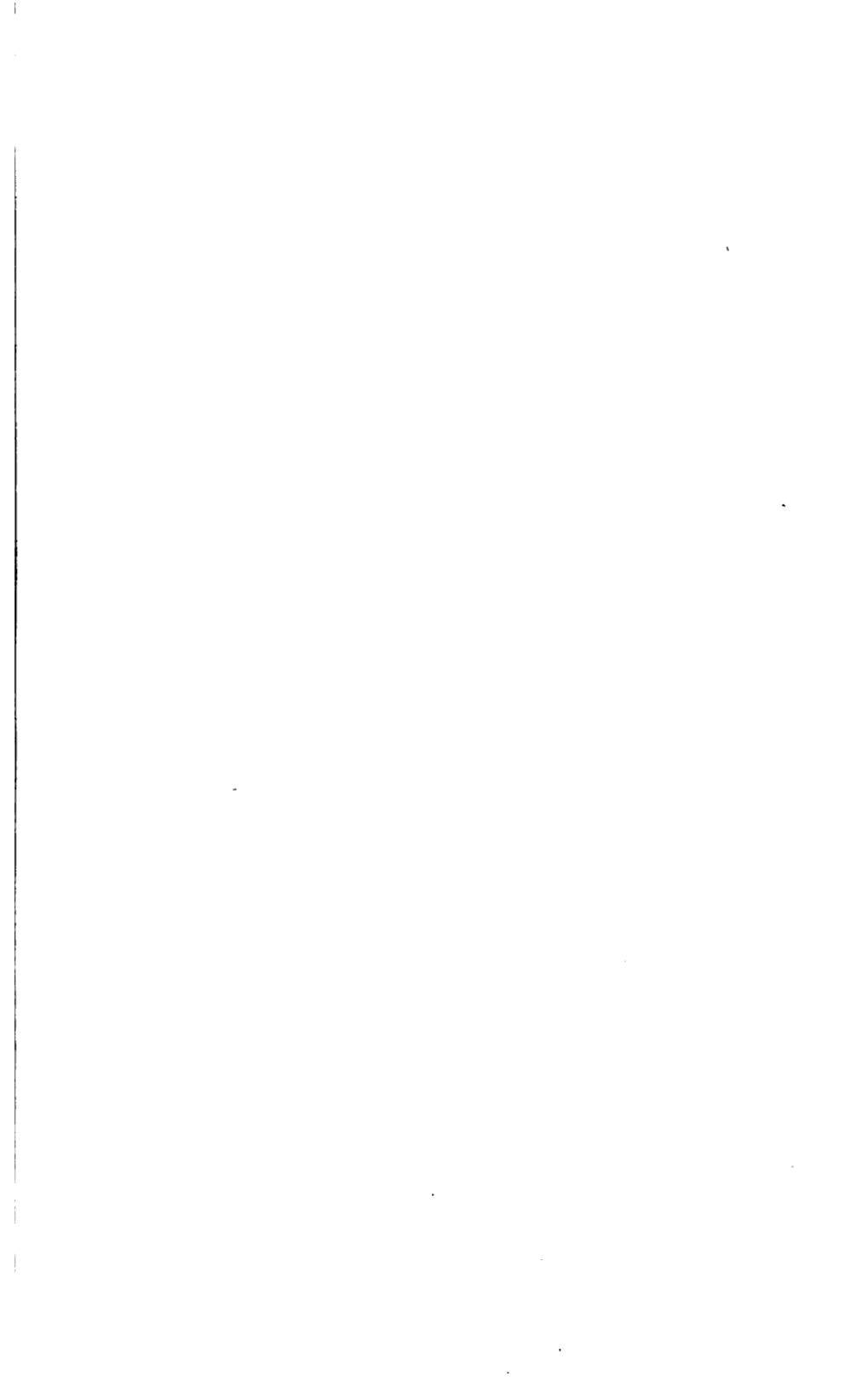
But the fancies change and vanish
As the dancing firelight dies,
And we sleep that rare sleep of the forest
Till the winds of the morning rise.





To Y—Pond

May the trout rise
And the loons laugh
From thy crystal waters,
Till all we who love thee
Have hit the one great trail
To the last camping ground.







Cry of the Loon

Voice of the lake and forest solitude.

Weird cry that echoes o'er the water's face,
As though some spirit lost, within this place
Its cry of anguish, here, again renewed.

Or, ringing o'er the forest's silent spell,
The loon's wild laughter smites the moveless
air,
As though in mockery of my presence, where
By ancient right, the wild-folk only dwell.

Or when adown the wind there wails the storm,
And on the wave-tossed lake the loon rides
free,
Commingled with that storm-sung melody,
Again that laughter to my ear is borne.

There comes a time within each passing year
When, for the North, my soul yearns long-
ingly,
Then, heard as in a dream, the loon's weird
cry,
Bids me return unto the forests dear.



Winter Voices

With murmurs low, within this snow-bound dell
The woodland brook proclaims its ice-bound
way,
Soft, tinkling note, as of some distant bell
Far-heard across the fields, this Winter's day.

Borne clear, upon the biting snow-filled air
There comes the call of some belated crow
Whose flight delayed, now seeks the shelter
where
Night after night, his dusky comrades go.

From out the hillside's gray entangled wood
There comes the clamor of the crested jay.
Voice of the Past! How often have I stood
Within thy spell, upon some long-gone day.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

At intervals, upon the passing breeze
Is borne the baying of some tireless hound,
As eagerly he trails among the trees
Where passed the fox upon his nightly round.

Such were the voices of that Winter's day,
Such sounds I heard as 'neath the trees I stood,
Where branch on branch the frost-king's mantle
 lay
And muffled were the voices of the wood.





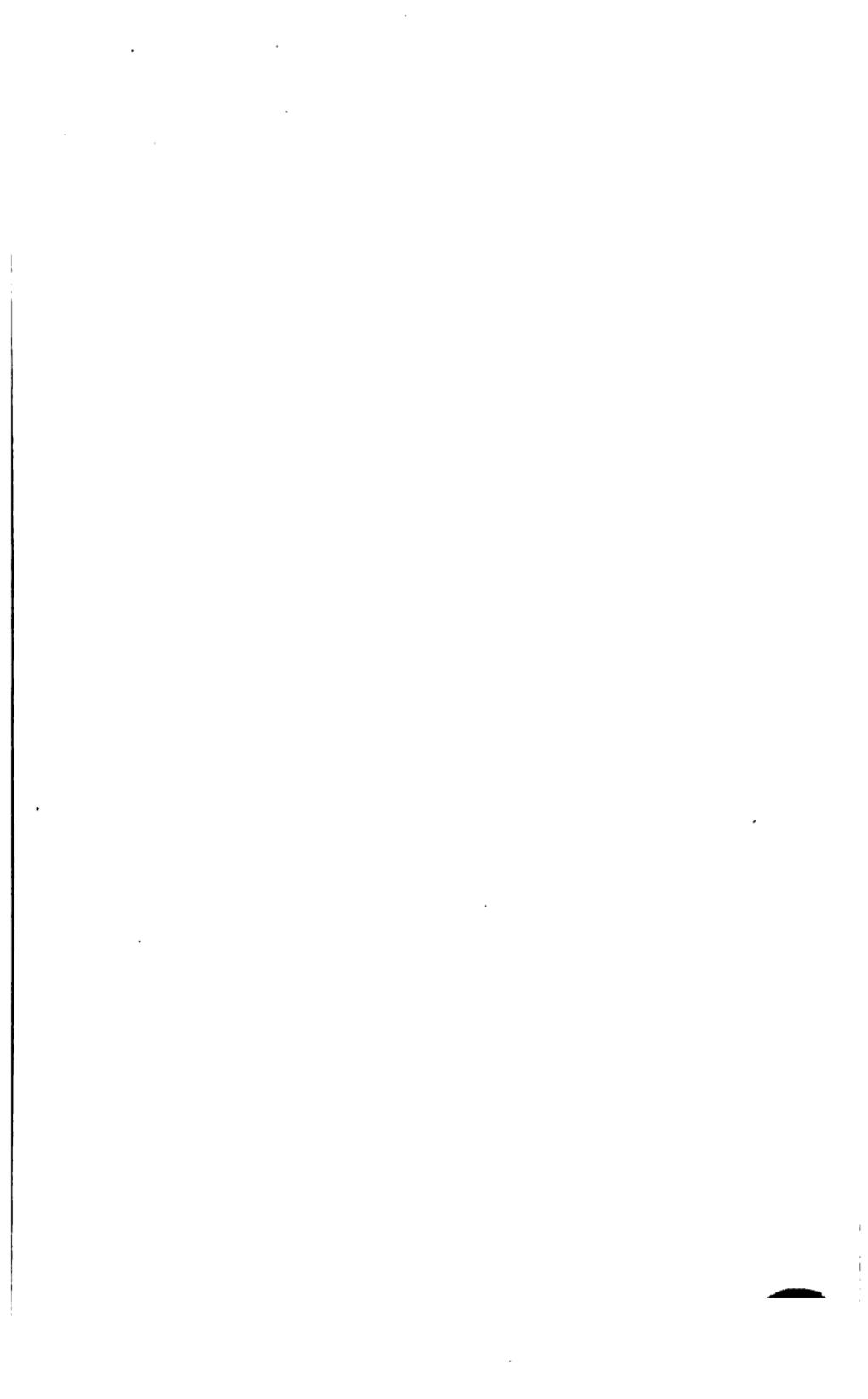
Wilderness

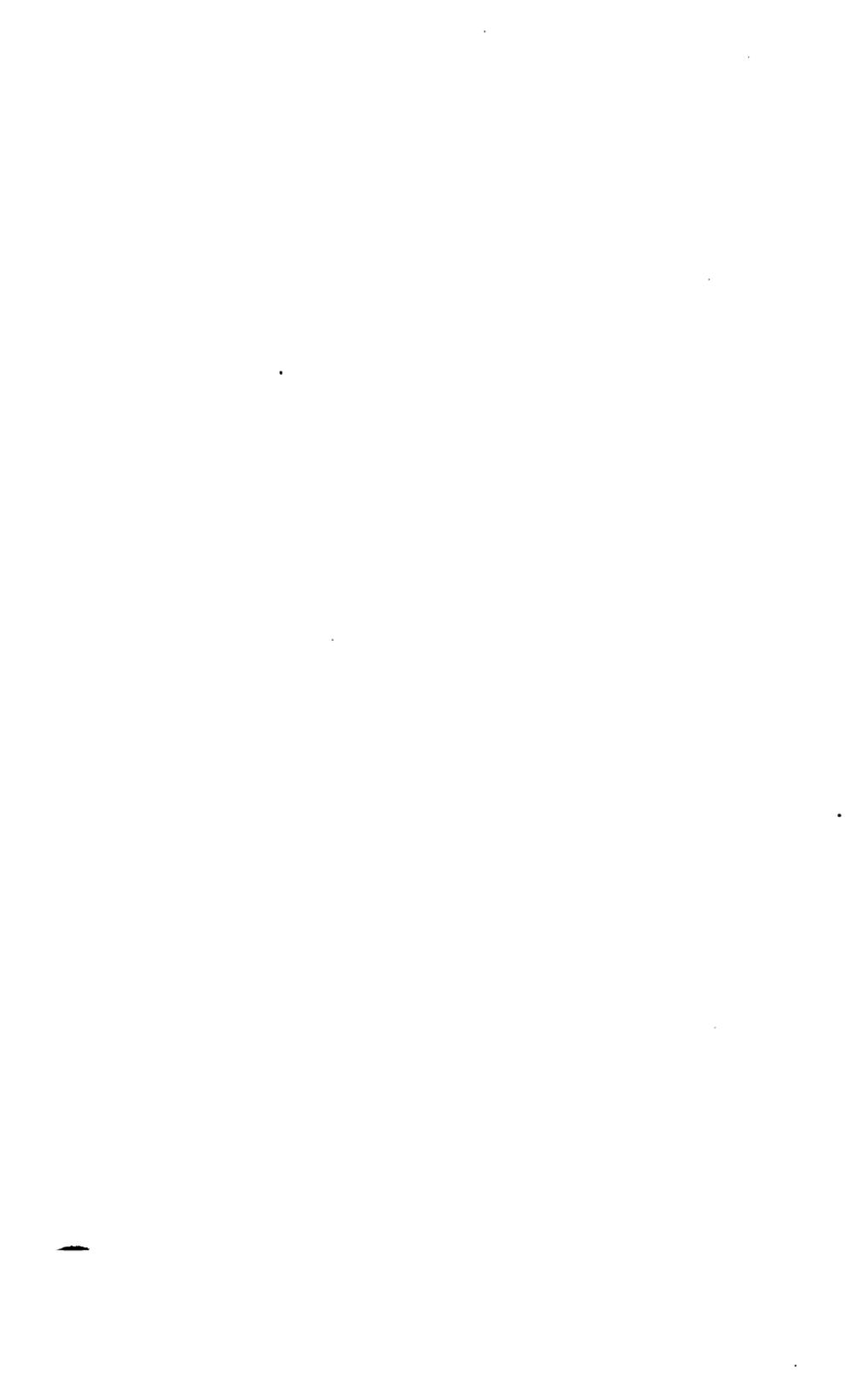
I stood in wonder on that mountain crest,
For northward stretched the forest's mystery,
As though in billows tossed, and yet at rest,
There lay the grandeur of some spell-bound
sea.

While scattered o'er that waste of forest trees,
The smiling faces of a myriad lakes
Laughed, as their waters felt the wandering
breeze,
That o'er the woods, its silent passage makes.

Far to the north, enshrined in purple haze,
A distant mountain range in grandeur lay,
Its forest-covered sides and tangled maze
But dimly seen, beneath the sun's clear ray.

Unseen, but heard from where I wondering stood,
The murmur of some distant water's fall.
The only voice from out that silent wood,
The wilderness enchantment over all.







Somewhere

Somewhere the hungry trout are rising
On waters 'neath the sunset's fading glow.
Somewhere the little stars are peeping
O'er forests where the twilight breezes blow.

Somewhere the ripples on the water
In silver patches rest, then slowly fade.
Somewhere the lily-pads are lying
There close within the far-shore's deeper
shade.

Somewhere the thirsty deer is wading
In shallow waters near the darkened shore.
Somewhere the moose, the lake is seeking,
His heated sides to splash its coolness o'er.

It's somewhere then I would be going
When twilight's spell falls 'round the closing
day.
To somewhere, lake and forest call me.
Would that I might that far-sent call obey.



The Fallen Pine

Within a tangled swamp, the tree we found,
Its aged trunk moss-grown o'er years decay.
Part upright still, it stood, part on the ground,
A fallen giant of a long-gone day.

Then came a vision of that olden time,
Pictured in fancy there before the eye.
Once more within the wood, there stood the pine,
Its twisted top far-flung against the sky.

With massive trunk high o'er the smaller trees,
A sentinel thus for ages has it stood.
First warnings felt of every storm-sent breeze
That swept the branches of that ancient wood.

In Summer, o'er the heat-enveloped glade,
Those twisted boughs, their varied shadows
spread.
Here paused the deer, within their deeper shade,
At night, here sought he then, his moss-grown
bed.

Rhymes of the Stream and Forest.

When Winter's winds, their icy burdens brought,
And decked this pine in crystal drapery,
What beauty here, the snow-king's magic
wrought
In untold forms of wondrous tracery.

Such forest music must this tree have known
When through its boughs, the wandering
winds have stirred,
Could but some mighty organ now intone,
Would hold in raptured spell, all those who
heard.

Could I but call from out those long-passed days,
The whispered melody of this lone pine,
Then to such heights, would I these verses raise,
That all the world would harken to my rhyme.



